



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Alaska District

Public Notice of Application for Permit

Regulatory Branch (1145b)
Post Office Box 898
Anchorage, Alaska 99506-0898

PUBLIC NOTICE DATE: Concurrent with DEIS

EXPIRATION DATE: Concurrent with DEIS

REFERENCE NUMBER: 2-991212

WATERWAY NUMBER: Turnagain Arm 45

Interested parties are hereby notified that an application has been received for a Department of the Army (DA) permit for work in waters of the United States as described below and shown on the attached plan.

APPLICANT: Intertie Participants Group (IPG), 5601 Minnesota Drive, Post Office Box 196300, Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6300.

LOCATION: The proposed electrical transmission line would stretch between the Kenai Peninsula and the City of Anchorage in south-central Alaska. The applicant's preferred route would originate at the Soldotna Substation, within the NW1/4, section 26, T. 5 N., R. 10 W., Seward Meridian (SM), east of Soldotna, and proceed in a northeasterly direction across the Kenai Peninsula, following an existing natural gas pipeline corridor through the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. The line would cross Turnagain Arm as a submarine cable, entering the arm at Chickaloon Bay, adjacent to Burnt Island, and landing at Oceanview Park in south Anchorage. It would then follow the Alaska Railroad right-of-way north, terminating at the International Substation in the SE1/4, section 36, T. 13 N., R. 4 W., SM, in Anchorage.

WORK: The IPG proposes to construct a 74-mile, 138kV electrical transmission line. Approximately 83% of the line would be attached to overhead tower structures, 16% of the line would consist of submarine cabling and approximately 1% would be installed underground. The proposed route would make two aerial crossings of the Kenai River, a navigable water of the United States. The towers would have a 200' minimum setback at all stream crossings. Installation of the pile-supported towers would not result in a discharge into wetlands being spanned. The marine cable would be installed beneath the vegetated intertidal areas of Turnagain Arm utilizing directional boring techniques from adjacent upland areas. In crossing the Arm, a water jet machine, towed behind the cable-laying barge, would create a trench in the basin substrate into which the submarine cable would be laid.

PURPOSE: The Southern Intertie Transmission Line Project is a system improvement project. The line would correct existing system deficiencies by providing a second line to accomplish the following:

- Increase reliability of the Railbelt electrical system and power supply to consumers by providing a second path for electrical power during

interruptions of the existing Quartz Creek line and by reducing load-shedding requirements in case of system disturbances.

- Increase electrical transfer capability of the transmission system between the Kenai Peninsula and Anchorage from 70 megawatts (MW) to 125 MW, reduce operating costs by allowing for more economical usage of existing generation resources, decrease overall system requirements for spinning reserves, and improve electrical system stability.
- Provide adequate access to power entitlements from the Bradley Lake hydroelectric generating station for the utilities north of the Kenai Peninsula, allow the Bradley Lake generation to be more fully utilized to reduce system-operating costs through increased hydrothermal coordination, and provide additional spinning reserves to the system north of the Kenai Peninsula.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The proposed route would parallel an existing pipeline corridor across the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, a designated Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Unit. Pursuant to provisions of Title XI of the Alaska National Interests Land Conservation Act (ANILCA), the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) has taken the role of lead agency and is writing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this project proposal. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the DA Corps of Engineers are cooperating agencies for project review. A DA permit decision will not be made until after the final EIS is prepared. This Public Notice only describes the applicant's preferred alternative. Detailed project descriptions, alternative route comparisons, and expected environmental impacts are contained in the draft EIS document for the Southern Intertie Project.

MITIGATION: As a result of early project planning, the applicant has incorporated into the proposed project the following mitigation efforts to reduce impacts to the aquatic environment: use of existing access roads, use of tracked and low ground pressure vehicles, temporary steel matting on compressible soils, scheduling of work during winter months when ground is frozen, suspending the transmission line beneath existing bridges, directional boring under streams and intertidal areas, or spanning wetlands and rivers with minimum tower setbacks.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: A permit for the described work will not be issued until a certification or waiver of certification as required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (Public Law 95-217), has been received from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT ACT CERTIFICATION: Section 307(c) (3) of the Coastal Zone, Management Act of 1972, as amended by 16 U.S.C. 1456(c) (3), requires the applicant to certify that the described activity affecting land or water uses in the Coastal Zone complies with the Alaska Coastal Management Program. A permit will not be issued until the Office of Management and Budget, Division of Governmental Coordination has concurred with the applicant's certification.

PUBLIC HEARING: Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, reasons for holding a public hearing.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: A cultural resource inventory has been completed within a two-mile-wide corridor of the alternative transmission line routes. A detailed record search identified 16 known archaeological and historical sites. All identified sites are listed in the Cultural Resource Inventory, Table 3-29 of the DEIS. In addition, sensitivity zones were modeled and cataloged based on landforms that could have archeological site potential. The resulting map of these sensitivity zones is depicted in Figure MV-31 of the DEIS. This application is being coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Any comments SHPO may have concerning presently unknown archeological or historic data

that may be lost or destroyed by work under the requested permit will be considered in our final assessment of the described work.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: The described activity is not expected to affect threatened or endangered species, or their critical habitat designated as endangered or threatened, under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 844). This application is being coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service. Any comments they may have concerning endangered or threatened wildlife or plants or their critical habitat will be considered in our final assessment of the described work.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: The proposed work is being evaluated for possible effects to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) pursuant to the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1996 (MSFCMA), 16 U.S.C. et seq and associated federal regulations found at 50 CFR 600 Subpart K. The Alaska District includes areas of EFH as Fishery Management Plans. We have reviewed the January 20, 1999, North Pacific Fishery Management Council's Environmental Assessment to locate EFH area as identified by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

(B). We have determined that the described activity may adversely affect EFH for juvenile and adult stages of Pacific salmon. This Public Notice initiates consultation requirements with the NFMS, under the MSFCMA, to assess the cumulative effects of the proposed work on EFH. Cumulative effects will be considered in our final assessment of the described work. Any conservation recommendations regarding EFH for federally managed fish will also be considered in our final assessment of the described work.

SPECIAL AREA DESIGNATION: The proposed project would be partially sited within the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, the Kenai River Comprehensive Management Plan Boundaries, and the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity and its intended use on the public interest. Evaluation of the probable impacts, which the proposed activity may have on the public interest, requires a careful weighing of all those factors that become relevant in each particular case. The benefits that reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. The decision whether to authorize a proposal, and if so, the conditions under which it will be allowed to occur, are therefore determined by the outcome of the general balancing process. That decision should reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal, must be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. Among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. For activities involving 404 discharges, a permit will be denied if the discharge that would be authorized by such permit would not comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's 404(b)(1) guidelines. Subject to the preceding sentence and any other applicable guidelines or criteria (see Sections 320.2 and 320.3), a permit will be granted unless the District Engineer determines that it would be contrary to the public interest.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments

received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

Comments on the described work, with the reference number, should reach this office no later than the expiration date of this Public Notice to become part of the record and be considered in the decision. Please contact Mr. Jack Hewitt at (907) 753-2724 or toll free in Alaska at (800) 478-2712, if further information is desired concerning this notice.

AUTHORITY: This permit will be issued or denied under the following authorities:

(X) Perform work in or affecting navigable waters of the United States - Section 10 Rivers and Harbors Act 1899 (33 U.S.C. 403).

(X) Discharge dredged or fill material into waters of the United States - Section 404 Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). Therefore, our public interest review will consider the guidelines set forth under Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act (40 CFR 230).

(X) Transportation and Utility Systems in, Across, and Access into, Conservation System Units in Alaska (Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA)) (43 CFR Part 36)

A plan and a Notice of Application for Certification of Consistency with the Alaska Coastal Management Program is attached to this Public Notice.

District Engineer
U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers